

# SPH Modelling of a 3D Tsunami Test Case

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## Abstract

Tsunami-induced coastal floods are relevantly represented among the deadliest and costliest disasters ever. In this context, several numerical techniques have been studied for prevention, protection and planning activities, for both catastrophic and more frequent events. An effective solution is provided by the SPH method, a mesh-less CFD (Computational Fluid Dynamics) technique, particularly suitable for flood event modelling.

This study describes the validation of a 3D “Weakly-Compressible” SPH (Smoothed Particle Hydrodynamics) model, considering a 3D tsunami test case (Benchmark 1-2009 of ISEC-Inundation Science&Engineering Cooperative-).

The model satisfactorily reproduces the sea level and velocity time series, recorded at the monitoring points. The results show the reliability and the further potentials of the model in representing a 3D generation and propagation of a solitary wave with the consequent coastal flood.

Finally this study seems to represent one of the first validations of a 3D SPH model on a tsunami test case.

## Keywords

SPH; Tsunami; Surface Waves; Floods; Wave Motion; Solitary Wave

## Introduction

Flood events have caused huge damages to human health, environment, anthropic structures and infrastructures. In particular, tsunami-induced coastal floods are heavily represented in both deadliest flood events and costliest disasters ever.

The five deadliest floods, causing over  $2.0 \cdot 10^5$  casualties, are cited in the following. After some years of drought, the Central China floods of 1931 (due to several months of huge precipitations) caused more than  $2.5 \cdot 10^6$  dead. Yellow River (China) was interested by two huge floods, responsible for more than  $9.0 \cdot 10^5$  casualties in 1887 and more than  $5 \cdot 10^5$  dead in 1938. Around  $2.3 \cdot 10^5$  individuals died because of a dam break event (Banqiao, typhoon Nina, China 1975).

Finally, an Indian Ocean tsunami caused around  $2.3 \cdot 10^5$  casualties in Indonesia (2004).

On the other hand, the costliest floods ever are represented by the following events (damage over 5 billions USA dollars -USD- each):

- $300 \cdot 10^9$ USD: Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami (2011, Japan), the costliest disaster ever, the most damage were due to the tsunami coastal flood;
- $46 \cdot 10^9$ USD: Thailand riverine and areal floods due to monsoons (2011);
- $26 \cdot 10^9$ USD. 1998 Yellow river floods;
- $7.0 \cdot 10^9$ USD. Armero tragedy (Colombia, 1985, pyroclastic flow floods);
- $5.0 \cdot 10^9$ USD: 2013 Alberta (riverine and areal) floods (Canada).

In this frame, several numerical techniques have been studied in order to simulate flood events (e.g. Le Veque et al. 2007), for prevention, protection and planning activities. Among the others, SPH (Smoothed Particle Hydrodynamics) method is particularly suitable for modelling these phenomena, such as coastal floods (caused by solitary waves/tsunamis, etc.), dam breaks (e.g. Grenier et al. 2009, Di Monaco et al. 2011, Amicarelli et al. 2013), riverine and areal floods, urban flooding, tank leakages (e.g. Maurel et al. 2009), floods caused by landslides or volcanic activities, etc.

SPH is a mesh-less Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) technique, whose computational nodes are represented by numerical fluid particles. In the continuum, the functions and derivatives appearing in the governing balance equations of fluid mechanics are approximated using convolution integrals over smoothing functions. Then for a generic function  $f$  the SPH integral approximation ( $\langle \rangle$ ) is provided by:

$$\langle f \rangle_{I, \mathbf{x}_0} = \int_{V_h} f W d\mathbf{x}^3 \quad (1)$$

where  $W$  is a weighting function (called kernel),  $\mathbf{x}_0$  is the position of a generic computational point and  $V_h$  the integration volume called kernel support (a sphere of radius  $2h$  in the inner domain, far from boundaries), whose characteristic length is  $h$ . A generic first order derivative along  $x_i$  direction can be still computed as in (1). After integration by parts, it takes the form:

$$\left\langle \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \right\rangle_{I, \mathbf{x}_0} = \int_{A_h} f W n_i dx^2 - \int_{V_h} f \frac{\partial W}{\partial x_i} dx^3 \quad (2)$$

Here a surface integration is considered all over the surface ( $A_h$ ) of the kernel support. This term is peculiar and necessary at boundaries, where the kernel support is truncated by the fluid domain frontiers and SPH truncation errors noticeably grow (Amicarelli et al., 2011a and 2011b). The modelling of this term can relevantly differentiate SPH models and is still object of recent studies (Adami et al. 2012, Hashemi et al. 2012, Macia et al. 2012, Mayrhofer et al. 2013, Ferrand et al. 2013, Amicarelli et al. 2013,).

SPH technique has several advantages:

- direct estimation of free surface and phase/fluid interfaces;
- effective simulation of multiple moving bodies and particulate matter within fluid flows;
- direct estimation of Lagrangian derivatives (absence of non-linear convective terms in the balance equation Left-Hand Sides);
- effective numerical simulations of fast transient phenomena;
- no meshing;
- simple and non-iterative algorithm.

On the other hand, SPH models are still affected by a few shortcomings, if compared with mesh-based CFD tools:

- higher computational time consumption at the same resolution (mean feature);
- limited accuracy, if considered as a general purpose CFD technique.

SPH models are effective in several, but peculiar, application fields. Some of them are here briefly recalled: floods; sloshing (e.g. oscillatory flows within tanks, Souto-Iglesias et al. 2006, Delorme et al. 2009, Amicarelli et al. 2013); gravitational surface waves (e.g. Manenti et al. 2008, Patel et al. 2009, Antuono et al. 2011, Liu et al. 2013, Omidvar et al. 2013, Farahani et al. 2014); hydraulic turbines (Marongiu et al. 2009, Neuhauser et al. 2013); fast landslides (Kumar et al.

2013); hydroelectric plant devices; bed load transport and erosion phenomena (Manenti et al., 2009 and 2012, Manenti 2011, Guandalini-Agate, 2011); liquid jets (Koukouvini et al. 2013); pollutant dispersion; astrophysics (e.g. Price and Monaghan 2007; Bauer and Spingel 2012); magnetohydrodynamics (e.g. Price 2012); multi-phase and multi-fluid flows (e.g. Kajtar-Monaghan, 2012). 2D SPH tsunami modelling (Shallow Water approximation) has been already tested, considering the ISEC 2004 Benchmark2, which reproduces Okushiri tsunami (Vacondio et al. 2012).

However, it seems there is a general lack of numerical model validations on complex tsunami events and coastal floods, especially in 3D.

In this context, this study is focused on the validation of the recent SPH model (Di Monaco et al., 2011) on a reference 3D tsunami test case (Benchmark 1-2009, ISEC). After this introduction, we recall the main features of the numerical model (Sec.2). We then describe the reference tsunami test case and the numerical configuration (Sec.3). Further we show and discuss the results (Sec.4) and we finally report the overall conclusions (Sec.5).

## The SPH Numerical Model

The numerical model used for this validation is based on the semi-analytic approach for complex boundary treatment (Vila, 1999). Its basic features are deeply described in Di Monaco et al. (2011) and here briefly reported.

Navier-Stokes equation and the continuity equation are first considered in the continuum:

$$\frac{du_i}{dt} = -\frac{\partial \left( \frac{p}{\rho} \right)}{\partial x_i} - \frac{p}{\rho^2} \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial x_i} - \delta_{i3} g + \nu \frac{\partial^2 u_i}{\partial x_j^2}, i=1,2,3 \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{d\rho}{dt} = -\rho \text{div} \underline{u}$$

where  $\underline{u}$  is the velocity vector,  $p$  pressure,  $\rho$  the fluid density,  $\delta_{ij}$  Kronecker's delta and  $t$  time (Einstein notation works for  $"j"$ ). The pressure gradient term has been split after a simple product rule for derivatives, in order to be more easily treated. In fact these equations are then elaborated using the SPH particle approximation of (2) and computed at each fluid particle position, as described in the following. The viscosity term for compressible fluids can be neglected in Navier Stokes equation, even if we adopt a Weakly Compressible fluid approach.

The SPH particle (discrete) approximation of a generic

derivative (2) can be computed at boundaries, according to the semi-analytic approach ("SA"):

$$\left\langle \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \right\rangle_{SA} = \sum_b (f_b - f_0) \frac{\partial W_b}{\partial x_i} \omega_b + \int_{V_h'} (f - f_0) \frac{\partial W_b}{\partial x_i} dx^3 \quad (4)$$

The summation is performed over all the fluid particles "b" (neighbouring particles of volume  $\omega$ ) lying in the kernel support of the computational fluid particle ("0"). This formula also shows a boundary term, which is a convolution integral on the portion of the kernel support, lying outside the fluid domain. This portion then completes the kernel support, when it is truncated by boundaries. In this outer and fictitious volume ( $V_h'$ ), we need to define a generic function  $f$  (pressure, velocity or density alternatively) to provide the proper boundary conditions. The semi-analytic approach, as developed by Di Monaco et al. (2011), follows this hypothesis:

$$\begin{aligned} f &\cong f_{SA} + \left. \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \right|_{SA} (\underline{x} - \underline{x}_0) \Rightarrow \\ &\Rightarrow \left\langle \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \right\rangle_{SA} = \sum_b (f_b - f_0) \frac{\partial W_b}{\partial x_i} \omega_b + \\ &+ \int_{V_h'} f_{SA} \frac{\partial W_b}{\partial x_i} dx^3 + \int_{V_h'} \left. \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \right|_{SA} (\underline{x} - \underline{x}_0) \frac{\partial W_b}{\partial x_i} dx^3 \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

The functions and derivatives of these first order Taylor approximations are then assigned according to the following assumptions:

$$\begin{aligned} p_{SA} &= p_0, \quad \left\langle \frac{\partial p}{\partial x_i} \right\rangle_{SA} = -\delta_{i3} g; \\ \rho_{SA} &= \rho_0, \quad \left\langle \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial x_i} \right\rangle_{SA} = 0 \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

These conditions try to represent a null normal gradient for the pressure displacement from hydrostatic conditions. Density is approximately considered to be a constant within the outer support  $V_h'$  (of the ongoing computational particle).

At the same time, free-slip conditions can be approximately set when estimating velocity in  $V_h'$ . The velocity vector is assumed uniform in this region (still depending on the computational particle). It is decomposed in the sum of a vector normal to the boundary ( $\underline{u}_{SA,n}$ ) and the one tangential to it ( $\underline{u}_{SA,T}$ ). The first is represented by a linear extrapolation of the corresponding component of the computational fluid particle velocity. The latter is equal to the analogous value of the same particle (the subscript "w" refers to the local truncating frontier):

$$\underline{u}_{SA} = \underline{u}_{SA,T} + \underline{u}_{SA,n} \equiv (1 - \varphi_s) \underline{u}_{0,T} + [(2\underline{u}_w - \underline{u}_0) \cdot \underline{n}_w] \underline{n}_w \quad (7)$$

In this case  $\phi_s$  is zero (free-slip conditions; for no-slip conditions  $\phi_s=1$ ).

The continuity equation ("Weakly-Compressible" SPH approach) can then be derived (Einstein's notation works for "j"):

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d\rho_0}{dt} &= \sum_b \rho_b (u_{b,j} - u_{0,j}) \frac{\partial W}{\partial x_j} \Big|_b \omega_b + \\ &+ 2\rho_0 \int_{V_h'} [(\underline{u}_w - \underline{u}_0) \cdot \underline{n}] n_j \frac{\partial W}{\partial x_j} dx^3 \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

Finally the approximation of the momentum equation provides the following expression:

$$\begin{aligned} \left\langle \frac{du_i}{dt} \right\rangle_0 &= -\delta_{i3} g + \\ &+ \sum_b \left( \frac{p_b}{\rho_b^2} + \frac{p_0}{\rho_0^2} \right) \frac{\partial W}{\partial x_i} \Big|_b \frac{m_b}{\rho_b} + 2 \frac{p_0}{\rho_0} \int_{V_h'} \frac{\partial W}{\partial x_i} dx^3 + \\ &+ 2\nu \sum_b \frac{m_b}{\rho_0 r_{0b}} (\underline{u}_b - \underline{u}_0) \frac{\partial W}{\partial r} \Big|_b + \\ &+ 2\varphi_s \nu (\underline{u}_{w,i} - u_{0,i}) \cdot \left( \int_{V_h'} \frac{1}{r_{0w}^2} \frac{\partial W}{\partial r} dx^3 \right) + \\ &- \nu_M \sum_b \frac{m_b}{\rho_0 r_{0b}^2} (\underline{u}_b - \underline{u}_0) \cdot (\underline{x}_b - \underline{x}_0) \frac{\partial W}{\partial x_i} \Big|_b + \\ &- \nu_M (\underline{u}_{SA} - \underline{u}_0) \cdot \left( \int_{V_h'} \frac{1}{r_{0w}^2} (\underline{x} - \underline{x}_0) \frac{\partial W}{\partial x_i} dx^3 \right) \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

$\nu_M$  represents the artificial viscosity (Monaghan, 2005),  $m$  the particle mass and  $r$  the relative distance between the neighbouring particle/boundary and the computational particle.

The second and third terms in the Right-Hand Side of (9) represent the inner and boundary terms related to pressure gradients. The next summation (Basa et al. 2009) and integral represent the molecular viscous terms (the latter being proposed only for no-slip conditions by Di Monaco et al. 2011, but not yet validated in 3D). We finally have two artificial viscosity terms, commonly used to stabilize SPH models and defined by Monaghan (2005, inner term) and Di Monaco et al. 2011 (boundary term). They are here activated, only for computational particles approaching neighbouring particles or boundaries, according to Di Monaco et al. (2011).

Time integration is performed with a staggered first order Euler scheme, where the continuity equation is translated in time of  $dt/2$  with respect to the momentum equation (Di Monaco et al. 2011, Violeau-Leroy 2014).

Finally a barotropic equation of state is linearized for small density oscillations as follows ( $c_{ref}$  and  $\rho_{ref}$  are the

reference sound speed and density):

$$p \equiv c_{ref}^2 (\rho - \rho_{ref}) \quad (10)$$

### The 3D Tsunami Test Case

The reference benchmark was proposed by the Johns Hopkins University and belongs to ISEC database. The 3D domain and monitoring points are shown in FIG 1.

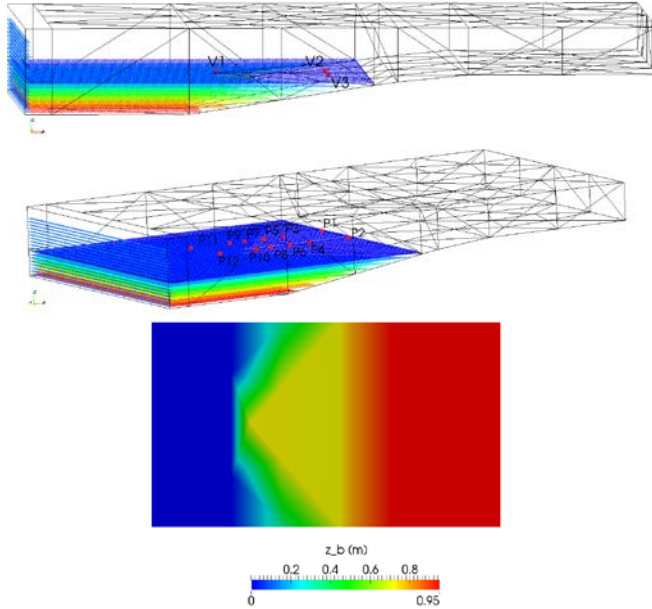


FIG. 1 TOP: 3D DOMAIN, WAVEMAKER AND VELOCITY MONITORING LINES (V1-3). CENTRE: SEA LEVEL MONITORING LINES (P1-12). BOTTOM: HEIGHT OF THE FLUID-BOTTOM INTERFACE (batimetry). THE PADDLE (wavemaker) IS SIMULATED USING SPH PARTICLES WITH IMPOSED PARAMETERS. THE VERTICAL AXIS IS STRETCHED BY A FACTOR OF 2, IN ALL THE FIGURES.

A solitary wave (or tsunami) is generated on the left of the domain and propagates over a pyramidal shaped inclined shelf. In particular, a wave generator (left-side of the domain) produces a wave of amplitude  $h^*=0.39$  m over the quiet free surface elevation ( $z=0.78$  m; the origin of the vertical axis is provided by the lowest point in the domain). The tsunami propagates towards the coastline (right-side of the domain). The irregular shelf is represented by a flat bottom, which evolves into an inclined shelf close to the the coast, at whose centre a pyramidal structure rises up. The overall phenomenon lasts 45s, but the most dynamics refers to the first 15-20s.

The numerical simulation has been configured accordingly to the experimental initial and boundary conditions. The parallelepiped inscribing the numerical domain is approximately  $70 \times 45 \times 3$  m<sup>3</sup> sized. The ratio between the kernel length size ( $h$ ) and the particle size ( $dx$ ) is equal to  $h/dx=1.25$ , with approximately  $dx=0.100$  m. Time integration is performed choosing a high CFL (Courant-Friedrichs-Lewy) number of around 0.7, using a staggered Euler scheme. The wave generator movement is imposed, according to the experimental dataset. The lateral boundaries are fixed (semi-analytical approach) and water can move beyond the coast-line.

### Results

The model results are here presented in terms of pressure and velocity fields, together with validations of the numerical sea level and velocity time series.

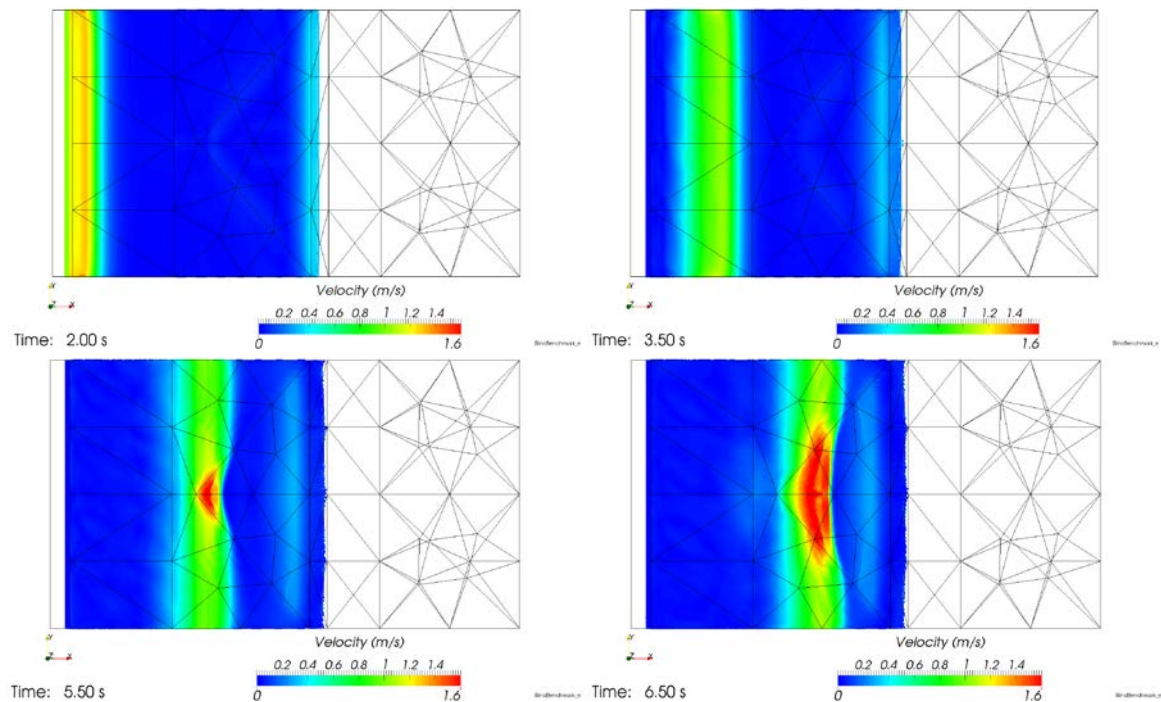


FIG. 2 3D FIELDS OF THE ABSOLUTE VALUE OF VELOCITY (top views).

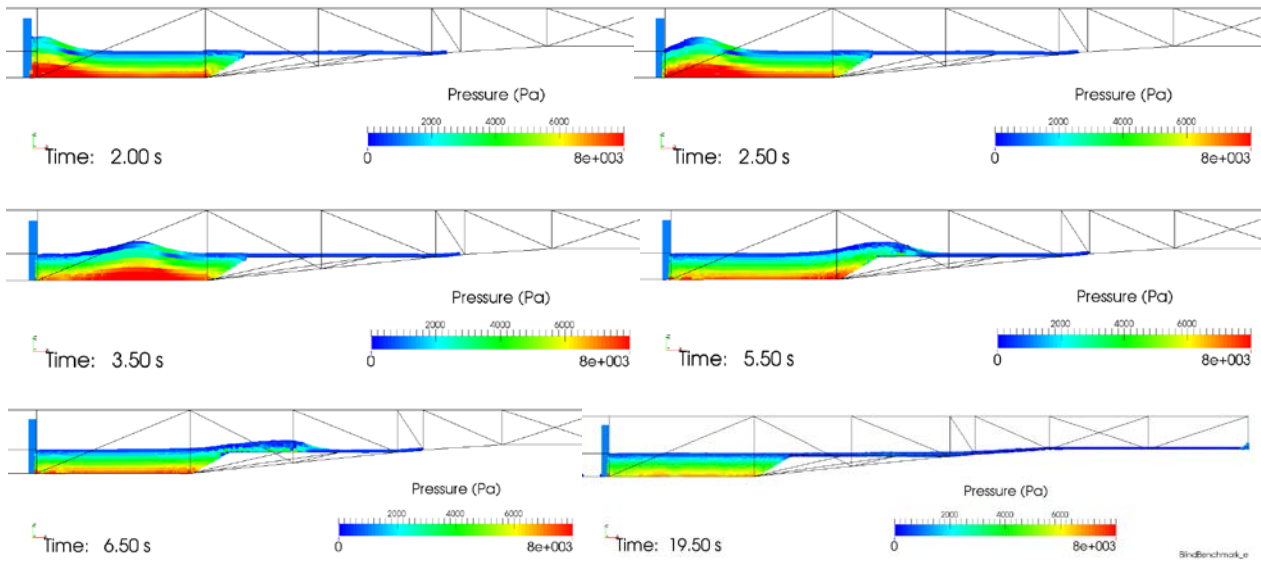


FIG. 3 SEQUENCE OF PRESSURE 3D FIELDS (vertical slice through the symmetry plane of the promontory).

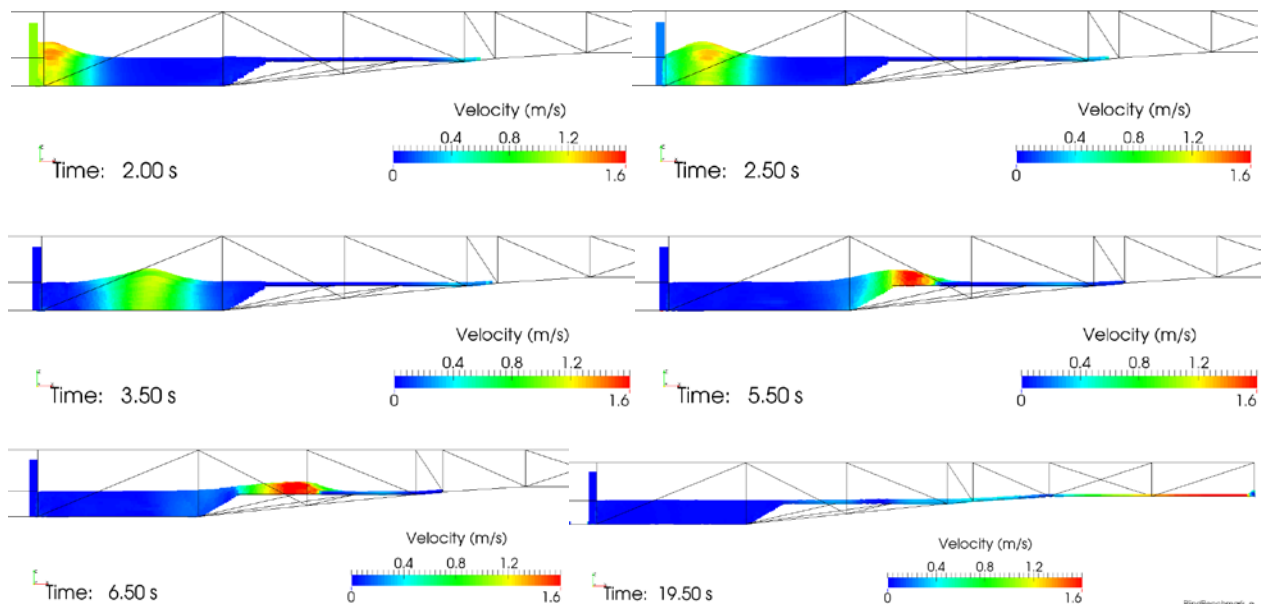


FIG. 4 SEQUENCE OF 3D FIELDS OF THE ABSOLUTE VALUE OF VELOCITY (vertical slice through the symmetry plane of the promontory).

FIG 2 reports a sequence of velocity fields (top views). The wave generation lasts around 3s. The first stage of the wave propagation is mainly 2D ( $t=3.5s$ ). When the tsunami reaches the submerged promontory ( $t=5.5s$ ), the wave group speed has a local minimum (lowest bottom depth). It gradually increases towards the lateral boundaries of the domain, with an increasing bottom depth (at the same time the surface fluid velocity is highest over the promontory and decreases far away). The wave direction locally converges to the promontory axis (wave refraction) while the wave begins to break ( $t$  around 6.5s). The phenomenon is affected by wave reflections both at the left and right domain boundaries. Wave interactions, minor stationary structures and jumps locally take place,

until water reaches again an almost quiet equilibrium (after  $t=30-35s$ ).

The 3D fields of pressure and velocity are also described by a sequence of vertical slices passing for the promontory barycentres (FIG 3 and FIG 4).

Pressure can locally fluctuate around the local hydrostatic vertical profiles (FIG 3). Despite some small-scale anomalies and a very few fluid particles penetrating the wavemaker, the model represents a regular pressure field and the limited errors do not propagate in time. Moreover we are not interested in very accurate estimations of pressure forces at boundaries, as this study focuses on the assessment of sea levels and velocity during a tsunami event.

The sequence of fields in FIG 4 shows the time and space distribution of velocity, whose maximum values reach around 1.6-1.8m/s. Velocity decreases from the free surface to the bottom, or moving far away from the solitary wave crests. High velocities are simulated in the breaking zone, then close to the paddle (during the wave generation) and beyond the coastline, during the flood. This event can be clearly detected at  $t=19.5s$ , with water covering more than a tenth of meters beyond the original coastline. Some details of the wave breaking are clearly represented in FIG. 5, which refers to a further simulation, with a slightly higher resolution ( $dx=0.08m$ ) than the reference simulation.

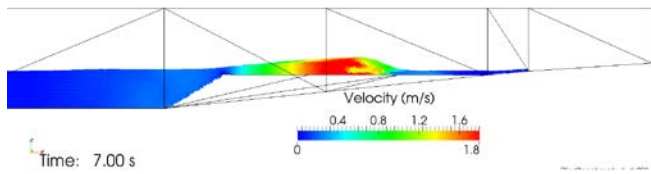


FIG. 5 Details of the wave breaking ( $dx=0.08m$ ).

Validations are performed against measures from 15 monitoring points or lines. All the plots are normalized using reference height ( $h^*=0.390m$ ), velocity ( $u^*=\sqrt{2gh^*}=2.76m$ ) and time scale  $t^*=(h^*/u^*=0.141s)$ , so that we treat non-dimensional variables ( $H=h/h^*$ ,  $U=u/u^*$ ,  $T=t/t^*$ ).

In particular, velocity estimations are validated in terms of time series of the x-component ( $u$ ) of the mean velocity, at three monitoring points (V1-3).

The monitor V1 is placed along the vertical line crossing the vertex of the promontory (FIG 1). Its position, expressed in meters, is (13.00; 0.00; 0.75 m). The main forward and backward movements of water occur between  $T=32$  and  $T=70$ . In this period we register the passage of the solitary wave, with water particles describing elliptical-like non-stationary trajectories. After this period a secondary wave is detected. The simulated values correctly reproduce the main features of  $u$  time evolution, even if some underestimations affect the amplitude of the peaks.

The velocity monitors V2 and V3 (FIG 1, centre and bottom, respectively) are closer to the coastline than V1 and transversally displaced with respect to the promontory. In these cases the measured time series show some lack of data (reference: ISEC web site). However several comparisons can still be performed. They show a satisfactory agreement between simulated and measured values. Nevertheless we can not catch, at this space resolution, the sudden sign inversion, which occurs at the monitor V2 ( $T=130$ ).

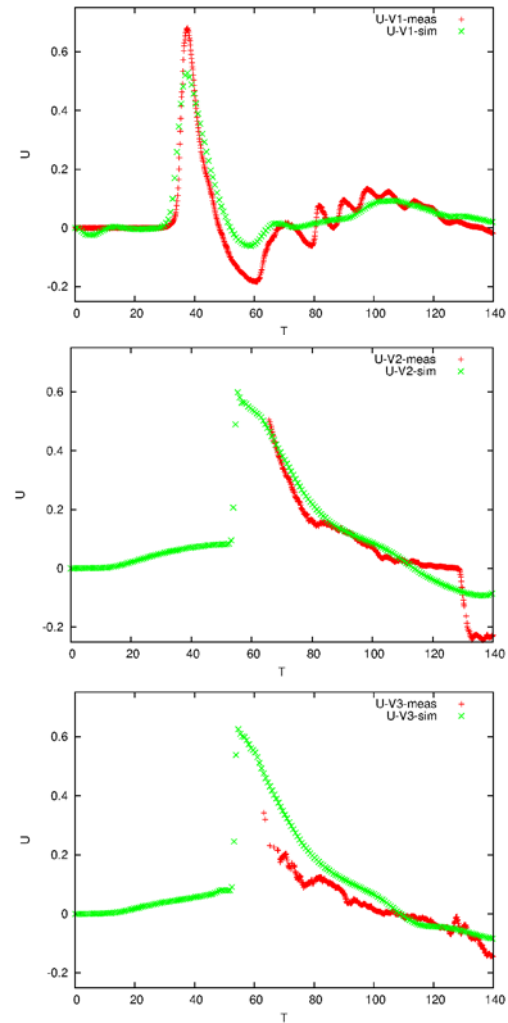
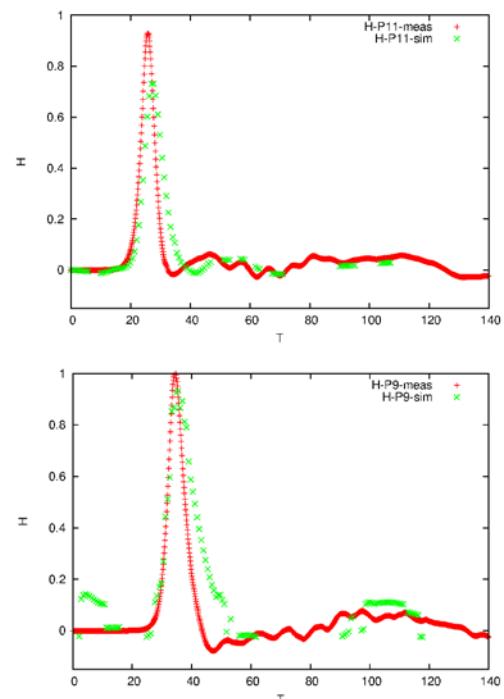


FIG. 6 TIME SERIES OF THE X-COMPONENT OF THE MEAN VELOCITY AT THE MONITORING POINTS V1-3. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE SIMULATED AND MEASURED VALUES.





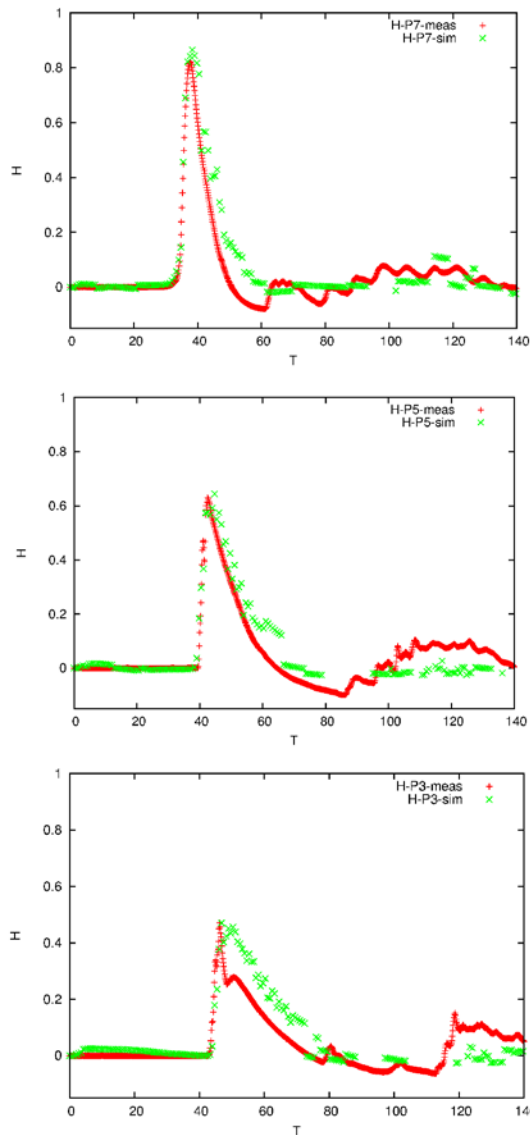


FIG. 7 SEA LEVEL TIME SERIES AT THE MONITORING POINTS P11, P9, P7, P5, P3. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE SIMULATED AND MEASURED VALUES.

Two asymmetric rows of measuring probes (P1-12, FIG 1) are used to validate the estimation of the sea levels (FIG 7, FIG 8, FIG 9, FIG 10). All the curves clearly detect the passage of the solitary wave, which is followed by a secondary wave motion.

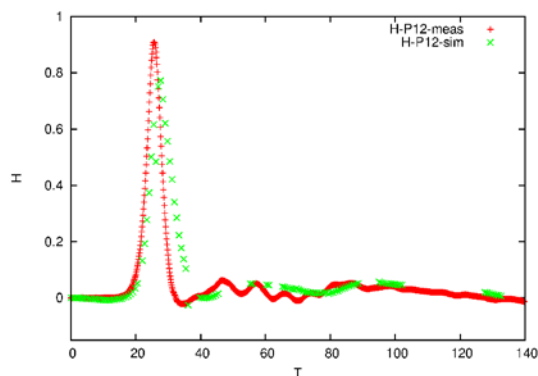


FIG. 8 SEA LEVEL TIME SERIES AT THE MONITORING POINTS P12, P10, P8, P6, P4. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE SIMULATED AND MEASURED VALUES.

The increment in sea level is accompanied by an increase in the wave group velocity and the fundamental frequency. The normalized sea levels show its maximum around the promontory (refraction effects), as already stated (surface wave velocity goes with the square root of the fluid depth, under shallow

water approximations, so that power fluxes and sea level peaks tend to concentrate around promontories). The comparisons between all the simulated values and the corresponding measures show the good reliability of the model in estimating sea levels. Nevertheless we notice some lack of numerical data (a numerical probe invalidates some sea level values when the particle distribution around it is not considered enough populated) and some peak underestimations, occurring at this space resolution. We can also notice that we slightly overestimate the sea level after the peak, especially at probe P3. This could involve an underestimation of the fluid velocity in the breaking zone or an overestimation of the wave power. However, the first hypothesis seems being invalidated by the velocity comparisons (FIG 6) which do not show any underestimation in the breaking zone. Finally, we underline the importance of a correct evaluation of the velocity field down-flow the wave breaking to assess the tsunami destructive power and run up on land.

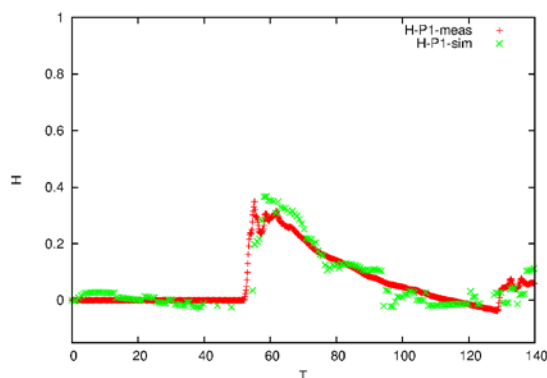


FIG. 9 SEA LEVEL TIME SERIES AT THE MONITORING POINT P1. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE SIMULATED AND MEASURED VALUES.

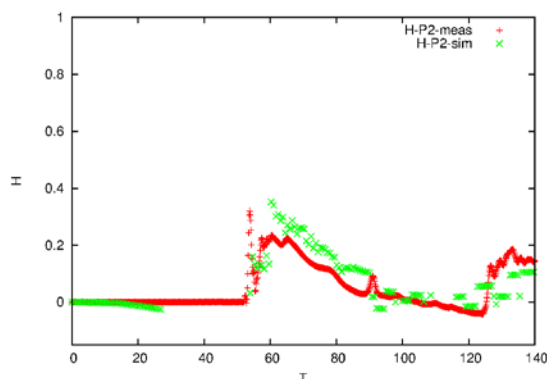


FIG. 10 SEA LEVEL TIME SERIES AT THE MONITORING POINT P2. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE SIMULATED AND MEASURED VALUES.

## Conclusions

A 3D SPH numerical model has been validated over a

laboratory tsunami test case. The results show a good reliability of the model in representing the propagation of a solitary wave on a 3D shelf, both in terms of velocity and sea level.

The application field of this kind of validations can involve gravitational surface wave propagation in natural and artificial basins, the corresponding interactions with complex 3D shelves and structures, together with the associated coastal flood events.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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